

KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

June 29, 2023

MINUTES

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee was held at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday June 29, 2023. The meeting was held at the Ross Building.

BOARD MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

Ms. Virginia Anagnost  
Ms. Desiree Beasley  
Rev. Sam Brown – representing Representative Sam McKenzie  
Mr. Chris Caldwell – representing Mayor Glenn Jacobs  
Ms. Anna Compton  
Ms. Polly Doka  
Mr. Kevin DuBose – representing Mayor Indya Kincannon  
Commissioner Kim Frazier  
Mr. Buz Johnson  
Councilwoman Gwen McKenzie  
Mr. Orris Nero  
Ms. Ashley Ogle – representing Mr. Ben Bentley  
Mr. Terrell Patrick  
Ms. Judy Poulson  
Judge John Rosson  
Mr. Tank Strickland  
Ms. Kenyadah Sullivan  
Mr. Derek Tate  
Ms. Lula Williams  
Mr. Charles Wright

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Doug Burton – representing Mr. Jeff Welch  
Ms. Ann Jefferson  
Ms. Kori Lautner – representing Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk  
Ms. Dena Mashburn – representing Mr. Kevin Parton  
Ms. Martha Olson  
Dr. Sandra Twardosz  
Ms. Melissa Vanderburg

The meeting opened with a moment of silence presented by Mr. Tank Strickland, board chair, presiding.

1. MINUTES (MAILED)

Mr. Strickland asked if there were additions or corrections to the minutes of May 25, 2023, board meeting. There being none, the minutes were approved as distributed.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Buz Johnson presented the Administrative Committee Report from Wednesday, June 21, 2023, and made the following report:

Approved the personnel actions on the attached sheet. The committee reviewed the Report of the Investments. No action is required. The Homeless Services report for May was reviewed. The Head Start/Early Head Start financial report and program report for the month of May was reviewed. The committee was advised that the Audit Report for the period ending June 30, 2022 will be released on or before September 30, 2023. The committee reviewed the Succession Plan: Procedure for covering emergency/unplanned short-term absence of the Executive Director. No changes are required. Full board approval is recommended. The committee recommends a pay increase of 3.5% for CAC employees, excluding Head Start, effective July 9, 2023. Regular employees in the low pay grades will be guaranteed a minimum increase of \$1,000. In those instances where the increase is less than \$1,000, the employee will receive a one-time pay adjustment equal to the difference. The amount will be based on the full-time rate and will be prorated for employees working less than full-time. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee was advised that the CSBG budget pre-planning has begun. There has been a \$20,562.14 decrease in the allocation based on Knox County's portion of the state poverty population. The committee reviewed and approved the Funding Summary for June 2023. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee was advised that the board training will take place at Alex Haley Farm on August 17, 2023, instead of the original date of August 24, 2023. Plans are being made for the June 29, 2023, board meeting to be held at the Ross building.

Mr. Johnson moved to accept the Administrative Committee Report for June 21, 2023. Mr. Derek Tate seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Compton asked to define "short-term." Ms. Kelly explained that there was no need for a strict time frame as long as the Administrative Committee and all appropriate parties are informed immediately.

Ms. Polly Doka moved to approve the Succession Plan: Plan for covering emergency/unplanned short-term absence of the Executive Director. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

### 3. CAC STAFF SALARY ADJUSTMENT

Ms. Barbara Kelly reviewed the recommendation to raise the pay scale for employees, excluding Head Start staff, by 3.5%, effective July 9, 2023. Regular employees in lower pay grades will be guaranteed a minimum increase of \$1,000. In those instances where the increase is less than \$1,000, the employee will receive a one-time pay adjustment equal to the difference. The amount will be based on the employees' full-time rate and will be prorated for employees working less than full-time.

Mr. Charles Wright moved to accept the pay scale adjustments for staff, excluding Head Start, by 3.5%. Mr. Tate seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting continued with Ms. Doka, board vice chair, presiding.

### 4. VITA REPORT

Mr. Terry Reed, Administrative Services manager, presented the following information regarding the 2022 tax returns prepared by Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program:

- 2,566 returns were accepted by the IRS.
- \$2,390,418 refund dollars were sent to clients.
- \$1,004,053 earned income tax credits were received.
- \$14,461 child tax credits were received.
- \$696,669 client filing fees that were saved by using VITA.

Mr. Reed told the board about a grandparent who had her grandchildren living with her for the last few years and was unable to receive the child tax credit because someone else claimed them. VITA worked closely with the client for two (2) years to obtain the earned child income tax credits. A couple of months ago, the grandmother received \$17,000 that was due to her. This is one of many VITA success stories. VITA works all year with individuals to provide tax services, and provides financial education to clients, most recently through the Budget in a Box video series. Videos can be found on the Knoxville-Knox CAC YouTube page or on the CAC website, [knoxcac.org](http://knoxcac.org).

### 5. TRANSFORMING WESTERN HEIGHTS UPDATE

Ms. Lisa Higginbotham, Special Projects director, presented Transforming Western Heights update to the board. CAC's role in this partnership project is the management of residence through a People Plan. The residents needs assessment provided the following information.

#### Accomplishments

- Six (6) year Choice Neighborhoods Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Grant awarded September 15, 2022, after a two-year planning process involving 90+ partners.
- Received HUD Technical Assistance from Urban Strategies, Inc.
- Established a Western Heights Community Center offering life skills classes, with a monthly newsletter.
- Hired an on-site Program Manager.
- Established youth programs, with existing partners.

### Population – Who is Served

- Based on CAC’s resident needs assessment with an 89% response rate:
  - 150 Households are currently part of the Western Heights community.
  - 382 people are in these households.
  - 48 are under the age of 5.
  - 122 are ages 5-17.
  - 187 are ages 18-64.
  - 25 are ages 65+.

### Median Household Income Comparisons

- \$10,000 Median Household income of Western Heights residents compared with Knox County
  - Knox County = \$38,700
  - City of Knoxville - \$55,000

### Income

- 35% receive SSI/SSDI.
- 29% wages earned income wages.
- 16% receive benefits only.
- 10% receive retirement benefits.
- 5% receive no income or benefits.
- 3% earn from side work.
- 2% receive unemployment insurance.

### Financials

- 53% of households have rent debt.
- 8% use buy now, pay later.
- 8% report owing legal fees.
- 26% have a checking account.

### Education & Youth Development

- 56% children ages 0-5 participate in early learning programs.
- 50% in kindergarten demonstrate age-appropriate functioning across multiple domains at the beginning of the program year.
- 3% of students are at or above grade level in mathematics.
- 11% of students are at or above grade level reading/language arts.
- 46% of students have chronic absences.
- 26% of youth are involved in after-school activities.

### CAC’s Next Steps

- A closer look at survey results to determine resident-reported barriers and perceptions.
- Host sub-population focus groups with both youth and refugee residents.
- Present the results to the residents and partners for feedback.
- Adjust the original People Plan based on updated results and submit revision to HUD by August 15, 2023, for review and approvals.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the full PowerPoint presentation, please contact [lisa.higginbotham@knoxcac.org](mailto:lisa.higginbotham@knoxcac.org).

Mr. Orris Nero moved to accept the update report on Transforming Western Heights. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## 6. GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND APPLICATIONS

Ms. Kelly reviewed the summary of grants, contracts, and applications, included in the board packet:

### **Nutrition Services**

Mobile Meals. Received \$10,000 from the Knoxville Area Fire Fighters Association for home-delivered meal service.

### **Office on Aging**

Telehealth Station. Received \$15,000 from the Trinity Health Foundation to launch a Telehealth Station and training pilot initiative at the J. T. O'Connor Center.

PAWS Program. Received \$6,000 from Meals on Wheels America Loves Pets Grant for veterinary support.

### **Social Services**

Homeward Bound. Received \$50,000 from Knox County to assist with rehousing homeless individuals and families. These funds are for June 2023.

## **Proposal/Application Summaries**

### **Nutrition Services**

Mobile Meals. Applied for \$1,500 from Meals on Wheels Rising Star Grant to be used for staff training.

Supplement Programs. Applied for \$25,000 from Meals on Wheels Unmet Need Grant to provide congregate dining and home repairs.

Mobile Meals. Applied for \$10,000 from Meals on Wheels Social Connection Grant to measure and address social isolation among Mobile Meals participants.

Mobile Meals. Applied for \$14,400 from KUB Community Care Grant for home-delivered meals.

### **Office on Aging**

Support Services. Applied for \$1,000,000 from the Mackenzie Scott Grant to support services and improve infrastructure for the rapidly growing senior population in Knox County.

### **Social Services**

Tutoring Program. Applied for \$30,000 from KUB Community Support Grant to provide supplies and salaries for contracted teachers for the tutoring program.

Commissioner Kim Frazier moved to accept the grants, contracts, and applications as presented. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. PROGRAM UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were found in the board packet or highlighted during the meeting:

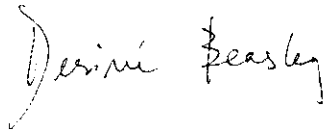
Ms. Kelly informed the board that CAC is working with the Knoxville-Knox County Emergency Management Agency (KEMA) on a Heat Emergency Plan. CAC will work with other organizations to let clients know about the dangers of excessive heat. Where applicable, CAC is prepared to maximize our services to assist those who may be at risk.

**CAC Grandparents as Parents (GAP) School Supplies Drive.** Now until August 31, 2023. Drop off school supplies at the Ross Building.

**Board Training.** Thursday, August 17, 2023, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, at Alex Haley Farm.

**Power of the Purse.** Thursday, September 14, 2023, doors open at 4:45 pm. Purchase tickets before August 18, 2023, cost \$50/ticket. After August 18, 2023, cost \$75/ticket. Tickets go on sale July 10, 2023 at [knoxcac.org](http://knoxcac.org).

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.  
Respectfully submitted,



Desiree Beasley, board secretary